

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 USPS-01 OC-05 CCO-00 L-03 ST-01 H-02

USIA-06 /061 W

----- 090840

R 201049Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4576

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONO

JCS WASHDC

COMUSMACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 24526

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MIL, TH

SUBJECT: RTG CRACKING DOWN ON APO

SUMMARY: IN LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE AMBASSADOR, SUPREME COMMAND REGISTERS COMPLAINTS ABOUT ALLEGED PAST ABUSES OF APO AND LAYS DOWN RULES RESTRICTING FUTURE APO OPERATIONS, TO TAKE EFFECT JANUARY 1, 1976. EMBASSY BELIEVES SOME ROOM TO NEGOTIATE THIS ISSUE EXISTS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN LETTER

DATED 14 NOVEMBER 1975 TO AMBASSADOR

WHITEHOUSE, CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME COMMAND, GENERAL

CHAROEN PHONGPHANIT RAISES QUESTION OF FUTURE APO OPERATIONS. TEXT FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT: AS THE THAI GOVT HAS PERMITTED THE U.S. MILITARY TO ESTABLISH FIELD POST OFFICES IN THAILAND IN ORDER TO RENDER COOPERATION IN SECURING CONVENIENCE, SPEEDY AND MILITARY SECRECY IN THE EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES BETWEEN U.S. MILITARY MEN IN THAILAND AND THEIR FAMILIES IN THE U.S. TO BOOST MILITARY MORALE, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND IN ORDER TO ACCELERATE THE SENDING OF PARCELS

OF THE MILITARY AS A SPECIAL CASE OF URGENCY. THEREFORE, THE PARCELS SENT TO MILITARY MEN THROUGH FIELD POST OFFICES SHOULD NORMALLY BE LETTERS, GIFTS OR SOUVENIRS OF LOW COST WHICH MERELY REPRESENT BEST WISHES OR MESSAGES AND WHICH HELP BOOST THE MORALE OF THE MILITARY MEN BEING FAR AWAY FROM THEIR FAMILIES. BUT IN PRACTICE, THE PARCELS HAVE BEEN FOR COMMERCIAL PURPOSES. EXPENSIVE COMMODITIES HAVE BEEN ORDERED AND SENT THROUGH THE FIELD POST OFFICES FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES WITHOUT GOING THROUGH THE CUSTOMS CHECKING, AND LATER GONE TO MARKET FOR SALE. FURTHERMORE, IT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED THAT POSTAL PARCELS AND MONEY ORDERS PROCESSING THROUGH THE FIELD POST OFFICES HAVE BEEN HANDLED UNJUSTLY AND HAVE BEEN INCONSISTENT WITH THE AGREEMENT CONCLUDED BY THE RTG AND THE USG. FOR INSTANCE, PRIVILEGES FOR USE OF FIELD POST OFFICES HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO NON-MILITARY PERSONNEL OR INACTIVE MILITARY PERSONNEL WITHOUT CAREFUL SCREENING OR CONSIDERATION OR PROPER CONTROL. THUS, IT PAVES THE WAY FOR PERSONS TO SEEK PERSONAL BENEFITS, AFFECTING THE THAI ECONOMIC STABILITY ALL ALONG. IF THE PRACTICE CONTINUES, THE THAI PEOPLE'S UNFAVORABLE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE AMERICANS WILL INCREASE. PARA THE RTG HAS PRUDENTLY CONSIDERED THIS MATTER AND IS OF THE OPINION THAT CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE IN THE USE OF FIELD POST OFFICES IN THAILAND TO ENSURE BETTER CONTROL, HOPING THAT INJUSTICE WILL BE ELIMINATED AND VIOLATION OF THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS WILL NO LONGER EXIST. PARA THEREFORE, THE FOLLOWING CONDITIONS HAVE BEEN FIXED FOR USE OF FIELD POST OFFICES OF U.S. MILITARY IN THAILAND:

1. PERSONS ELIGIBLE FOR USE OF FIELD POST OFFICES ARE ACTIVE U.S. MILITARY MEN AND THEIR DEPENDENTS, AND THE CIVILIANS ATTACHED TO THE U.S. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND THEIR DEPENDENTS ONLY.

2. THINGS TO BE SENT THROUGH FIELD POST OFFICES ARE LETTERS, POST CARDS, SMALL PACKETS AND PRINTED MATTER ONLY AND THEY MUST NOT BE MORE THAN 1 KILOGRAM  
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AND WORTH NOT MORE THAN 35 U.S. DOLLARS.

3. PERSONAL PARCEL POST SENDING THROUGH FIELD POST OFFICES MUST BE SUSPENDED, SINCE THERE HAS BEEN AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE USG AND THE RTG ON THIS MATTER ALREADY (PARCEL POST AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE POSTAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE POSTAL ADMINISTRATION OF THAILAND.

4. THE SENDING OF MONEY ORDERSTHROUGH U.S. FIELD POST OFFICES MUST BE SUSPENDED, BECAUSE THERE ALREADY EXIST THE AGREEMENT FOR EXCHANGE OF INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDER BETWEEN THE POSTAL ADMINISTRATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES AND THAILAND.

5. THE U.S. MILITARY SHALL ESTABLISH A CENTRAL FIELD POST OFFICE IN THAILAND (US CENTRAL MILITARY POST OFFICE - USCMPO) AND IT MUST BE LOCATED AT DON MUANG AREA. THE CENTRAL FIELD POST OFFICE SHALL BE THE OFFICE OF THE AUTHORITIES HANDLING THE POSTAL PARCELS SENT IN AND OUT OF THAILAND. A TEAM OF THAI JOINT CUSTOMS GROUP INSPECTORS (TJCGI) SHALL BE ASSIGNED TO THIS CENTRAL FIELD POST OFFICE TO OBSERVE THE WORK OF THE U.S. AUTHORITIES IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE THAT THE LAWS AND THE ABOVE CONDITIONS WILL BE COMPLIED WITH PROPERLY. THE TEAM SHALL HAVE FULL AUTHORITY TO OPEN AND INSPECT THE INCOMING AND OUTGOING POSTAL PARCELS AT THE FIELD POST OFFICE, AND TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION ACCORDINGLY.

6. THE CONDITIONS ON USE OF THIS FIELD POST OFFICE SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE AS FROM 1 JANUARY 1976.

THE SUPREME COMMAND HQ HOPES FOR FULL COOPERATION FROM YOU. THANK YOU. END TEXT.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4577

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONO

JCS WASHDC  
COMUSMACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 24526

2. COMMENT: IT IS OF INTEREST THAT THE LETTER IS FROM CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME COMMAND, TO THE AMBASSADOR. WHILE THIS IS NOT TOTALLY WITHOUT PRECEDENT, IT IS UNUSUAL. CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME COMMAND, ORDINARILY COMMUNICATES WITH EITHER COMUSMACTHAI OR POMILCOUNS.

3. UNUSUAL CHANNEL IN WHICH LETTER WAS HANDLED SUGGESTS MFA IS INVOLVED. THIS INFERENCE IS BOLSTERED BY FACT THAT ON AT LEAST ONE OCCASION IN RECENT PAST MFA WORKING-LEVEL OFFICER DEALING WITH U.S. FORCES AFFAIRS HAS TOLD EMBOFF THAT APO AND AFTN WERE AMONG ITEMS TO BE EXAMINED IN CONNECTION WITH U.S. RESIDUAL PRESENCE IN THAILAND.

4. HOWEVER, FACT THAT LETTER WAS NOT SIGNED BY FOREIGN MINISTER SUGGESTS THAT RTG IS NOT PREPARED TO GO ALL-OUT ON THIS ISSUE AND IS THEREFORE NOT COMMITTING TOO MUCH FACE AT THIS POINT. WE BELIEVE SUPREME COMMAND'S DEMANDS ARE NEGOTIABLE. PRESENTING ULTIMATA OUT OF THE BLUE IN THIS FASHION HAS BEEN CHARACTERISTIC OF THAI PERFORMANCE ON OTHER OCCASIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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BUT IT HAS USUALLY BEEN POSSIBLE TO TALK THEM DOWN FROM OR OUT OF THEIR INITIAL HARD POSITION.

5. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO CAPITULATE TOO RAPIDLY ON THIS ONE. PERHAPS BY AGREEING TO THE ASSIGNMENT OF THAI JOINT CUSTOMS GROUP INSPECTORS (ONE OF THE THAI DEMANDS) WE CAN, AT LEAST FOR A TIME, RESIST ALL OR MOST OF THE OTHER DEMANDS. WE WILL BEGIN EXPLORING THIS WITH THE THAI AND WILL KEEP YOU ADVISED.

6. FYI: BASIC AGREEMENT ON APO IS EXCHANGE OF LETTERS BETWEEN CHJUSMAG AND C/S SUPREME COMMAND, DATED 8 JUNE AND 26 JUNE 1962 RESPECTIVELY. LETTERS WERE EXCHANGED FOLLOWING MEETING ON JUNE 5, 1962 BETWEEN AMBASSADOR YOUNG AND PRIME MINISTER MARSHAL SARIT AT WHICH AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE WAS REACHED. WHITEHOUSE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ARMED FORCES, TEXT, DIPLOMATIC NOTES, POSTAL SERVICE, PUBLIC ATTITUDES  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 20 NOV 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**TAGS:** MILI, PFOR, TH  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
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